

PHD RESEARCH

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'For Führer and Flanders'. The motivation and world view of Flemish collaborators during the Second World War

War - [Original Title : *Voor Vlaanderen, Volk en Führer, de motivatie en het wereldbeeld van Vlaamse collaborateurs tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog*]

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Historiography as well as the collective memory in Flanders has long been dominated by a very narrow and restricted view of collaboration with the German occupying forces during the Second World War. This view has put a strong focus on Flemish nationalism, ignoring possible National Socialist elements in the motivation or thoughts of pro-Nazi collaborators. This dissertation draws up a new typology, grouping collaborators who share the same sets of motives, and investigates their ideology and world view. Based on a discourse analysis of ego documents, the author draws four important conclusions : 1) collaboration was not only an economic or ideological decision, but also a social act; 2) ideological collaborators adopted a double identity; they identified themselves with the Germans and national-socialism, but also remained true to their Flemish identity; 3) Hitler was seen as the 'ultimate leader', who would lead them into a brighter future; and 4) this brighter future could only be achieved through a very strong commitment.